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Letter dated 25 September 2000 from the Chargé d'affaires, a.i. of the Permanent Mission of Yugoslavia to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General

I have been instructed by my Government to draw your attention to the statement made by the Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Albania to the fifty-fifth session of the United Nations General Assembly on 16 September 2000. By its substance and tenor, as well as by the amount of attention devoted to developments in a neighbouring country contrary to the well-established and widely honoured etiquette that Foreign Ministers customarily undertake to speak of the achievements of their own countries, the statement is illustrative of the persistence of the Republic of Albania in its policy of interference in the internal affairs of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, paternalism in its relations with the ethnic Albanian minority in, and the territorial aspirations towards parts of, my country. That policy is based on the long-term concept of "Greater Albania", promoted by Albanian politicians in their practical actions despite contrary public pronouncements.

The territorial aspirations of Albania towards my country are not of recent date. They run deep into history, and the recognition by the Albanian Parliament of the non-existent "Republic of Kosovo" in 1991 was only one relatively recent blatant demonstration of those aspirations. The recognition of the "Government" of Hashim Thaci, the leader of the terrorist so-called Kosovo Liberation Army (KLA), in 1999 fits the same policy pattern.

That policy, embedded in overt support to ethnic Albanian separatism and terrorism in Kosovo and Metohija, the autonomous province of the Yugoslav constituent Republic of Serbia, the provocation of border incidents and in various other threats to the territor... [illegible] ... Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, determined the role of Albania in last year's aggression of the North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) against my country. Convinced that the NATO aggression was conducive to the secession of Kosovo and Metohija, Albania made its military infrastructure available to the aggressors and, by the attack of its military on the Yugoslav border area of Mount Pastrik on 9 April 1999, joined their bandwagon, one prong of the tripartite aggression of NATO, KLA and the Republic of Albania.

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The deployment of the international security and civil presences provided Albania with an opportunity to further its annexationist goals. It has intensified its campaign and, to that end, opened a "liaison office" in Kosovo and Metohija, availing itself of the Regulation on the establishment of such offices in that Serbian province, brought in outright contravention of Security Council resolution 1244 (1999) of 10 June 1999 by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General and head of the United Nations Interim Administration Mission in Kosovo (UNMIK). It also allowed the "Republic of Kosovo" to open two representative offices in Tirana. The highest-ranking officials of the Republic of Albania, including its President and Foreign Minister, have visited Kosovo and Metohija, without the prior knowledge and consent of the authorities of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia. In the words of the Albanian President, his visit last May was of historic significance, aimed at strengthening cooperation between Albania and that Serbian province.

Albania has taken a number of practical steps to prop up its expansionist policy. It opened its border with the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, allowing for an onrush of thousands of its nationals into Kosovo and Metohija, as well as unchecked crossings of KLA terrorists and other armed ethnic Albanian groups in both directions. Needless to say, the influx, coupled with the flawed policies of the international presences and KLA terror and violence, has had a tremendous impact on the present demographic situation in that Serbian province, characterized by the ethnic cleansing of Serbs and other non-Albanians and their exodus on a massive scale. The gravity of the situation has been independently confirmed by Mr. Carl Bildt, Special Envoy of the Secretary-General for the Balkans, who said in his "weekly letter" last June that about 200,000 non-Albanians, mainly Serbs, had been forced to leave Kosovo and Metohija since the deployment of KFOR and UNMIK. He also pointed out that the situation was tense and deteriorating as violence escalated, with Serbs its principal victims.

The "concern" of the Foreign Minister of Albania in his statement for the internal stability of the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia is calculated at diverting international attention from the chaos and lawlessness in his own country, exemplified by the people's revolt of 1997 and the resultant disintegration of the entire political system of the Republic of Albania. Despite elections held under international pressure and three subsequent changes of the regime, stability and law and order have not been achieved and Albania continues to be riven by severe social problems. Moreover, Albania has become a haven of international organized crime, as well as a way station for KLA and other international terrorists en route to Kosovo and Metohija. It is also a conduit for illegal traffic in narcotic drugs, smuggling of arms and stolen vehicles, white slavery and juvenile prostitution.

The expansionism of Albania and its steady slide into lawlessness and economic backwardness are a black hole and a constant source of instability and a threat to peace in the Balkans. The consequences are felt, not only by the Federal Republic of Yugoslavia, but also by many other countries in and outside of the region. Therefore, the shift of the focus of the Foreign Minister of the Republic of Albania in his statement to the General Assembly away from the problems of his country is not only a singular display of a lack of etiquette, but also a deliberate attempt to cover up those problems and blame others for their persistence.

I should be grateful if you would have the present letter circulated as a document of the General Assembly, under item 9.

(*Signed*) Vladislav **Jovanovic**
Chargé d'affaires a.i.